

*What Is Life?* By Augusta Gaskell. Introduction by Karl T. Compton, Professor of Physics, Princeton University, and Raymond Pearl, Professor of Biology, The Johns Hopkins University. 324 pages. Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas, Publisher, 1928.

This is one of the most fascinating books the writer has ever read with the idea of offering a review. Assuming the correctness of the Bohr-Sommerfeld planetary theory of the atom, the author has produced a most alluring argument for her contention that life has resulted from a condition of a "critical concentration of ions" affording an opportunity for a stray electron to sneak into the field of positive hydrogen nucleus while its own electron is wandering off at "aphelion."

The book does not lend itself readily to a popular review, but it is of extreme interest to a reader with limited knowledge of physics but interested in the subject and eager to increase his knowledge. At first the idea seems a little bizarre and one almost unconsciously compares it with a family triangle where the flapper stenographer sneaks into the home and upsets the equilibrium.

The author has very wisely chosen a well known professor of physics and a teacher in biology to present introductions to the book, and while they do not endorse the theory presented, they have to admit that the "fundamental assumption must be admitted as possible." The reviewer has carefully read this volume, even to the third time, and always with increasing interest. To do the book justice would require many pages. No one, even with a meager knowledge of physics, can lay it aside once it is begun. In his "Philosophy" Bertrand Russell says: "But now electrons and protons themselves are dissolved into systems of radiations by Heisenberg and into systems of waves by Schrodinger \* \* \* \* And these are not wild metaphysical speculations; they are sober, mathematical calculations accepted by the great majority of experts." If this be true, the fundamental assumption on which the book is written is destroyed. But the reviewer will reread the book many times, and as Osler said, he preferred to be wrong with Plato and accept immortality, the reviewer prefers to be wrong with Millikan and accept the planetary theory of the atom, earnestly hoping that some laboratory workers may follow the suggestions of Dr. Gaskell and seek for proof or disproof of this most engaging hypothesis as to the fundamental cause of life.

*Physiotherapy in General Practice and for the Use of Masses.* By E. Bellis Clayton, M.D., B.Ch. (Cantab.), Director of the Physiotherapeutic Department, and in Charge of the Massage and Electrical School, King's College Hospital, London. Second Edition. 231 pages. New York: William Wood & Co., 1928. Cloth, \$3.50.

This manual presents physiotherapy in a broad sense. Not only are the methods of application of light and electricity but exercises are given in detail. Only a page and a half are devoted to massage, and there is no section on hydrotherapy.

Despite these omissions, the book is to be commended for its clarity of expression and the detail with which the indications and applications of physiotherapy are outlined in disease.

*Notes on Chronic Otorrhea, With Especial Reference to the Use of Zinc Ionization in the Treatment of Selected Cases.* By A. R. Friel, M.A., M.D., (Univ. Dub.), F.R.C.S.I., An Assistant Aurist, School Medical Service, London County Council; Aurist to Tottenham, Hornsey, and Walthamstow Education Committees. 87 pages, illustrated. New York: William Wood & Co., 1929. Cloth, \$2.25.

This is a small volume of ninety pages, with fair illustrations, describing and commending the use of electric current and zinc ions in the treatment of chronic otorrhea. One reads it with interest and remains unconvinced.

*What Every One Should Know About the Eyes.* By F. Park Lewis, M.D. 70 pages. New York: Funk & Wagnalls Co., 1928. Cloth, 30c.

For many years Dr. Lewis has been recognized as the leader in the educational campaign for the prevention of blindness. This little volume is short, less than seventy pages, can be carried in the vest pocket, and it would be a blessing if every high school and college student would read the first half of it once a year. In the campaign for a physical examination on every birthday one could wisely advise the occasional reading of a volume from the National Health Series, no one of which is superior to this by Dr. Lewis.

*Diagnostic Methods and Interpretations in Internal Medicine.* By Samuel A. Loewenberg, M.D., F.A.C.P., Assistant Professor of Clinical Medicine, Jefferson Medical College; Assistant Physician to the Jefferson Hospital. 1032 pages, with 547 illustrations, some in colors. Philadelphia: F. A. Davis Company, 1929. Cloth, \$10.00 net.

This book is written from a practical viewpoint, the author explaining methods of elicitation and interpretation of physical signs in the diagnosis of disease. In special sections, laboratory methods are given. A highly commendable feature of the book is the way the author explains the indications for special examinations.

## Southern Medical News

### ALABAMA

Dr. W. E. Wilson, Dadeville, County Health Officer of Tallapoosa County, has been awarded a scholarship to Johns Hopkins University by the Rockefeller Foundation.

The Northwest Section of the Alabama Medical Association held a conference in Tuscaloosa on June 6 with the Tuscaloosa Medical Association. More than one hundred members attended.

The Northern Division of the Alabama Medical Association held its meeting in Gadsden on May 23.

Dr. W. Groce Harrison, Birmingham, has been appointed lecturer on the history of medicine at Vanderbilt University School of Medicine, Nashville, Tenn., and will assume his duties in September.

### Deaths

Dr. W. H. Bell, Birmingham, aged 65, died May 21, after being ill several months.

Dr. Alvenzi Jasper Gilbert, Birmingham, aged 73, died March 21.

Dr. Charles Isaac Dahlberg, Suggsville, aged 69, died March 13 of heart disease.

Dr. Eugene Robnett Smith, Section, aged 85, died March 28 of cerebral hemorrhage.